

New Commissioner of Workforce Investment Visits Shelby Co. ATC

Meet Laura Owens – our new commissioner of Workforce Investment. She has hit the ground running since her official appointment began on May 1, 2004.

Owens will oversee the five departments that were attached to the former Cabinet for Workforce Development including the Department for Technical Education, Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department for Employment Services, Department for Training and ReEmployment and Department for the Blind.

During her first official week on the job, Owens took the time to make a visit to the KY Tech Shelby Co. Area Technology Center (ATC). The school visit, hosted by Principal Debbie Anderson, provided Owens an occasion to personally meet faculty, staff and students.



Debbie Anderson greets Commissioner Owens.



Owens is instructed on the "how to" of taking blood pressure.



A hands-on visit to the health science lab provided Commissioner Owens with a chance to have her height measured, weight taken and blood pressure read. First photo from l to r – Michelle Cook and JaQuish Marshall (both juniors) check the height of Commissioner Owens. Second photo - Nanette Urschel, RN, explains that students are currently studying for their Medicaid Nurse Aide state final written exam; and far right, LaDonna Piper, a Shelby Co. H.S. junior, informs the commissioner that her blood pressure is well within the appropriate limits – 114/82.

“What a grand way to kick off my role as commissioner of Workforce Investment! Thanks to the Shelby Co. ATC’s willingness to allow me the opportunity for a participatory visit, I got a first-hand look at the classes being offered to area students,” said Owens. “The collaborative relationship between schools, community and the technology center appears to be one of genuine commitment. It is my intent to promote similar partnerships across the state.”



Clockwise from left– Tyler Thompson works on computer components of a CPU in the information technology classroom; Industrial Maintenance Technology Instructor Jim Cash explains some of the experiments taking place in his classroom; Shelby Co. H.S. junior Chris Jackson explains how students in the physics class made the “paper” catapult he is holding and the industrial maintenance technology students built the “real working model” in the background; a visit to the machine tool technology lab provides the commissioner a birds eye view of students creating their own tools.

No stranger to education, workforce training and civic leadership, Owens has served as an independent consultant in leadership and job training skills; a member of the Glasgow City Council and has served in various capacities in curriculum and instruction in the Barren County School District. She holds master’s and bachelor’s degrees in communication from Western Kentucky University.



“It is imperative that schools and communities are aware of the high-level performance attainable through technical education programs,” says Owens. “It is this commitment that will prepare Kentucky’s workforce with expanded career diversity and establish the necessary high standards to serve as benchmarks across the nation.”

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Commissioner Owens addresses business technology students.



Machine Tool Technology Instructor Mike Clark shares a student project with the commissioner.